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METROPOLITAN WATER DISTRICT OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

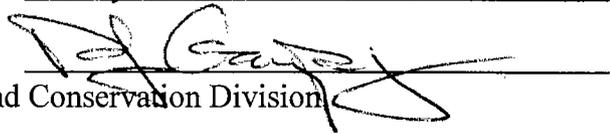
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August 4, 1997

To: Board of Directors (Executive Committee--Action)
(Budget and Finance Committee--Action)

for **From:** General Manager





Submitted by: Robert J. Gomperz
Acting Director, Public Affairs and Conservation Division

Subject: Request for Approval of \$300,000 for the California Science Center

RECOMMENDATION(S)

It is recommended the Board approve \$300,000 (\$100,000 annually for three consecutive years, beginning fiscal year 1997-1998) for an educational water fountain exhibit at the entrance of the renovated California Science Center, a state museum, located at 700 State Drive, Los Angeles, California.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Through a partnership with the California Museum of Science and Industry, the Los Angeles Unified School District, the University of Southern California and NASA/Jet Propulsion Laboratory, the state museum is being renovated to change the way children in Southern California learn about science. The California Science Center will be a unique, world-class education center offering an integrated, hands-on approach to science education by utilizing available technology and direct community resources. The \$265 million funding needed for the three-phase development will be provided through public and private grants. To date, \$128 million has been committed toward the Phase I goal of \$130 million for the main building complex.

DETAILED REPORT

In a world of unprecedented technological change, our ability to compete in the global economy increasingly depends on a sophisticated, science-educated workforce. Sadly, the science and math skills of American children -- particularly in California -- have fallen behind those in other nations.

- In 1993, California ranked at or near the bottom on almost every indicator of science and math education.
- By the eighth grade most American students have lost interest in science.
- In every international comparison, U.S. children very often rank near the bottom in math and science skills.
- Women and minorities -- the fastest growing segments of the future workforce -- are severely under-represented in the sciences.
- Only one elementary school teacher in 100 has even a minimal background in science.

To combat this situation, a partnership was formed to renovate the California Museum of Science and Industry (CMSI) into a world-class education center offering an integrated, hands-on approach to science education. Scheduled to open in February, 1998, the California Science Center will be the only facility in the country to integrate a learning complex (the California Science Center), an elementary school (the Science Center School), and an education resource center (the Science Education Resource Center).

The California Science Center will be a new 260,000 square foot center offering interactive exhibits, live programming and a diversity of opportunities for entry-level and in-depth exploration of science through four unique theme areas: *Worlds Beyond*, *World of the Pacific*, *World of Life* and *Creative World*. Moving beyond traditional static displays, the center will feature multi-sensory, hands-on experiences to creatively capture the imagination of its visitors and spark their scientific curiosity.

The new Science Center School, developed in partnership with the Los Angeles Unified School District, will serve neighborhood children grade levels kindergarten through fifth and emphasize accelerated learning in science, math and technology. The school will primarily serve children who live in the surrounding community, although approximately 30 percent of the students will be drawn from a broader geographic area.

The new Science Education Resource Center, developed in cooperation with the University of Southern California, will structure instructional materials and activities for teachers utilizing the center. USC also plans to use the Science Museum School as a professional practice school for its pre-service and in-service teacher development and enhancement activities. The USC School of Education has developed a Masters program in Science Education in connection with the center. The Resource Center, with the help of the NASA/Jet Propulsion Laboratory at the California Institute of Technology, will use advanced communications technology to offer long-distance learning to math and science teachers throughout California and beyond.

The museum will also include leaseable, state-of-the-art conference facilities; a new 3-D IMAX theater; enhanced dining areas and innovative public spaces highlighting science and art.

A part of the center's objective is to continue its education on the importance of water. In 1990, Metropolitan contributed \$100,000 to the CMSI for an exhibit titled "*Our Urban Environment*" which explains the role of science in environmental issues related to air, water and land. The new Science Center will expand that education through a water fountain exhibit located at the main entrance. A nearby hand-pump will demonstrate what happens when change (hydrologic pressure) is introduced into the system. In addition, a nearby visitor's bench cut in the shape of California will depict the major natural and man-made water conveyance systems throughout the state. Metropolitan's contribution of \$300,000 would be permanently recognized by a plaque near the exhibit and on the main "donor molecule wall" inside in the building's sunlit atrium.

CEQA COMPLIANCE/ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTATION

The proposed action is exempt from the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act because it does not have the potential to cause a significant effect on the environment.